

## **February 22, 2008 Homeless Education Update**

*A current list of Vermont Homeless Education Liaisons can be found on the Education for Homeless Children and Youth website:*

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_homeless.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_homeless.html) <[https://webmail.state.vt.us/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_homeless.html](https://webmail.state.vt.us/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_homeless.html)

### **Homeless Education Community:**

#### **RE: Dramatic Increase in Request to Schools for Housing and Other Assistance:**

This school year has seen a dramatic increase in the requests for housing and other assistance directed to Homeless Education Liaisons and school staff. In response to questions from you in regard to serving homeless students, Diane Janukajtis, Director of the Vermont Homeless Children and Youth Project, and I met with Scott Johnson, Deputy Commissioner for Field Services, to discuss the situation in the schools and to obtain information on what you need to do when you have a student or family requesting housing or other assistance.

The McKinney Vento Law specifically addresses the need for schools to identify and enroll students who are experiencing homelessness. The focus of your work is to maintain educational continuity. Schools are not staffed or prepared to provide housing and emergency assistance. This information is intended to guide you in responding to requests for assistance in an effective way. **As you can see, the first step is not a call to the local shelter.**

**Please note: It is important that you document both student information and referral information using the Homeless Liaison Worksheet:**

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/toolbox/liaison\\_worksheet.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/toolbox/liaison_worksheet.pdf)

**STEP 1:** Contact your local **Economic Services Office**. This office can provide families with **general assistance funds, motel accommodations, food stamps and other emergency services**. The link below takes you to a map of the Vermont Agency of Human Services Field Offices; click into your town information and you will bring up all the contact information for that office, including Economic Services.

<http://humanservices.vermont.gov/services/district-contacts/ahs-district-offices>

**STEP 2:** You may also contact the **Community Action Agencies**; these agencies have some **flexible funding to assist families with housing and immediate needs**. I have attached a list of the Community Action Agencies in Vermont.

**STEP 3:** For families who have been serially homeless and may have used both Economic Services and Community Action Agency resources already, you can contact the **AHS Field Services Director**. The Field Services Director can pull together a **team of community service providers** who can focus intensively on a family that is highly at risk, including students who are at risk. I have attached a list of the AHS Field Service Directors to this message.

There is a statewide initiative underway called "**Housing Now**". This effort will establish a lead agency in each county for housing case management. If you are interested in participating in discussions in your area regarding this initiative and the needs that you see in your school, I have included below information on the "Housing Now" meetings that have been scheduled:

Barre:	Aldrich Library, Milne community Room, Barre	March 10 <sup>th</sup>	10-noon
Middlebury	Middlebury College, Kirk Main Room, Middlebury	March 13 <sup>th</sup>	2-4 pm
Bennington	Second Congregational Church, Hillside Street, Bennington	March 21 <sup>st</sup>	10-noon

Additional meetings not yet set up for locations are below:

April:	Hartford	April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	9:00-11:45- Lynn Boyle
	Newport	April 1 <sup>st</sup>	10:00 to noon- Dave Yacovone
	Brattleboro	April 10 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 to noon- Lynn Boyle
May:	Springfield	May 27 <sup>th</sup>	11:30-1:30
	St. Albans	May 19 <sup>th</sup>	1:00-3:00- Sue Schmidt
	Lamoille	May 8 <sup>th</sup>	9:30-11:30

You can contact your local AHS Field Services Office for the locations of some of the meetings above.

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Office at the Vermont Department of Education and the Vermont Homeless Children and Youth Project are interested in supporting the success of homeless children and youth in our schools. Your success as a Homeless Education Liaison is our success. Please contact the VHCYP staff if you have additional questions:

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/homeless\\_brochure.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/homeless_brochure.pdf)